



June 29, 2001

Mr. Craig H. Smith  
Deputy General Counsel  
Texas Workers' Compensation Commission  
4000 South IH-35  
Austin, Texas 78704

OR2001-2796

Dear Mr. Smith:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 148979.

The Texas Workers' Compensation Commission (the "commission") received a request for a copy of the job description and posting for a particular position, copies of the applicants that made the "down sort" for interviews for the position, and copies of the test and interview questions, along with scores.<sup>1</sup> You inform us that some of the requested information will be provided to the requestor, but claim that certain interview and test questions, along with their responses, are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.122(b) excepts from disclosure test items developed by a licensing agency or governmental body. In Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994), this office determined that the term "test item" in section 552.122 includes any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated, but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. Whether information

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<sup>1</sup>We note the requestor also asked several factual questions. Although the Public Information Act does not require a governmental body to answer factual questions, Open Records Decision No. 555 (1990), a governmental body must make a good faith effort to relate a request to information which it holds. Open Records Decision No. 561 (1990).

falls within the section 552.122 exception must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Open Records Decision No. 626 at 6 (1994).

The commission believes that interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6, along with their respective responses, as well as the OAO skills test questions, their answers, and attached documents, are excepted under section 552.122(b). Having reviewed the questions the commission seeks to withhold, we find that all of the interview questions evaluate the applicant's overall job performance or suitability, and therefore, none of the interview questions or their answers are "test items" as contemplated by section 552.122(b). This information must be released to the requestor. However, we find that all of the OAO skills test questions, their answers, and the materials the applicant must review to answer the questions, are "test items" as contemplated by section 552.122(b). Therefore, you may withhold those questions and answers and related materials under section 552.122(b). We have marked the information to be withheld.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Pearle".

Michael A. Pearle  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MAP/seg

Ref: ID# 148979

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Ray Sondag  
1005 County Road #126  
Floresville, Texas 78114  
(w/o enclosures)